



**May 2014**

**NEWSLETTER FOR THE PAID & VOLUNTEER STAFF OF RAILTOWN 1897 STATE HISTORIC PARK**

**Upcoming Events**

**May 6**

Railtown Ladies Luncheon  
11:30am @ Papa's Roost  
Call Marge 533-4595

**May 10**

National Train Day  
Special events

**May 11**

Mother's Day  
Music by Sequoia

**May 15-18**

Calaveras County Frog  
Jump @ Motherlode Fair

**May 24-26**

Memorial Day Weekend  
Excursion trains Friday, Saturday and Sunday

**May 28**

Volunteer picnic at Railtown.  
BBQ potluck, 3-6:30pm

**May 30**

Interpretive Master Plan  
Stakeholders Meeting  
Time TBA

**May 31**

The Telling The Railtown  
Story series continues with  
*"The Railroads of Tuolumne  
County"* w/ Kyle Wyatt  
Curator II (8-9:30am)

**June 3**

Railtown Ladies Luncheon  
11:30am @ Covers Apple  
Ranch, Call Marge 533-4595

**June 7**

5th Annual Singing Rails  
Festival, featuring the music  
of Woody Guthrie by the  
Wailin' Woody's

**June 14**

Father's Day @ Railtown

**June 14-15**

48th Annual Father's Day  
Fly-In @ Columbia Airport

**July 2**

Wednesday trains begin.  
Every Wednesday in July  
and August. Starts with  
*"Story Time in The Little Red  
Caboose"* at 11am and  
trains at 12 & 2pm.



**The Geology of The Mother Lode & Table Mountain**

Our area developed because of a quirk in the geology of this region. Had it not been for a seam of gold running through this area, towns would not have been built and developed where they are currently found, populations and livelihoods would have been vastly different and quite likely, our railroad would never have been built. Visitors to the Mother Lode are usually fascinated to learn a bit about how it came to be. Surprisingly, even most local residents are unaware of much of the geology they live on.

**Origins of The Mother Lode**

The seminal event for the western Sierra foothills was the development of the Mother Lode. The origins date back 100 to 150 million years, when the earth was quite different. At that time the continents were still moving away from one super continent and drifting into their present positions. Our mighty Sierra mountains had not yet developed and great earth movements were common. In this time of massive earthquakes, a huge deep fault developed in the earth's crust in what would some day be the area we are in now. The fault ran north and south, and while continuous over a great distance, had numerous side faults and associated smaller parallel faults. These faults became avenues for the movement of liquefied and gaseous minerals

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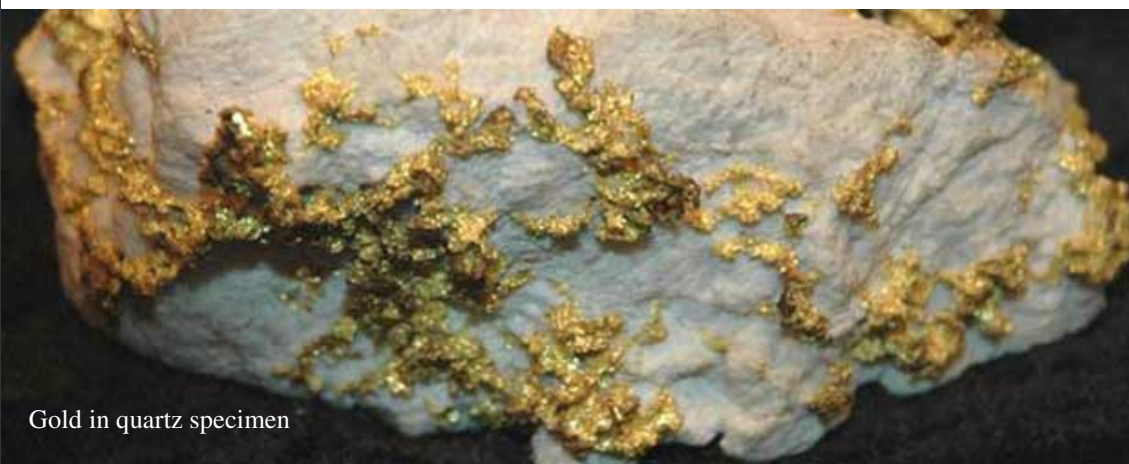
(Geology continued) moving upward from the earth's molten core toward the surface. Primary among the minerals that penetrated this soft seam in the earth's crust was quartz, which crystallized as it very slowly cooled. Along with the quartz, gold escaped into the voids between the quartz crystals and in other cracks in the Sierra's granite. This rare metal was left in thin, flat wandering sheets, the veins of gold later found in our local rock. While the quartz vein is continuous and virtually within sight of Highway 49 for its entire length, a good deal of it is devoid of any gold. In other places there were large voids (vugs) in quartz structure, which filled with gold, creating what miners later called "bonanzas" and the mines where they were found, "glory holes".

For one hundred million years the gold lay in the rocks as the earth's surface moved and took on the appearance we know today. Eventually a series of volcanic events and great pressure from the Pacific Plate pushed against the western edge of the North American plate caused the uplifting of a giant mountain range, the Sierra Nevada. The old rocks with their gold veins lay on the western edge of this up-welling.

As the mountains grew, rivers cut into the land, exposing and eroding the surface, including the quartz seam with its gold veins. (Actually this river cutting has occurred twice along the western Sierra foothills, first about 50 million years ago and again relatively recently, in the past few million years.) The water carried bits of the quartz and gold down into streams and rivers. As the quartz and rocks tumbled down the stream bed they broke apart and pieces of gold were dislodged.

#### Table Mountain

The period when the Sierra was formed was one of extensive volcanism. During this time, about 9 million years ago, a volcano near the crest of the Sierra erupted and its lava flowed out of the cone and down the western slope of the mountains. The lava filled the ancient Stanislaus River canyon without overflowing it, and eventually solidified into a solid mass. Over the millions of years, erosion removed the softer original river banks leaving nearly vertical walls of palisade like brown/black basalt. The end of the lava flow is today a field of lava rocks along Highway 108 near the town of Knights Ferry. Some commercial garden suppliers 'harvest' the rocks for sale in landscape applications.



Gold in quartz specimen



A placer Gold Nugget



Ironstone's 44 lb. specimen

#### **The Ironstone Winery Gold Specimen**

The largest crystalline gold specimen in the US was uncovered Christmas eve in 1992 in Jamestown by the Sonora Mining Company, a Canadian mining venture operating out of Nevada. The original specimen weighed 60lb. Troy. Today it weighs 44lbs troy after John Kautz, the owner of the Ironstone Winery purchased it, and put it through a reduction process to reveal more of the gold. He built a special vault and it is today available to view for free at his winery in Murphys.





## Railtown News

### A Note From Kim Baker

An important part of our interpretive master plan process is your input. Our first stakeholders workshop with the planning contractors will be Friday, May 30th. We will let you know as soon as the time is confirmed. We hope you can come and bring more of your great ideas for the future of interpretation at Railtown

### Volunteer Picnic/Potluck at Railtown

Bring your own meat, drinks and a dish to share and join us for the first volunteer picnic of the season. It starts at 3pm. It's a good idea also to bring your own plate and utensils. Join the fellowship with other Railtown volunteers and possible games. For more information call Dottie Bolander at 209-533-8483

### Railtown To Become a California State Landmark

The State Historic Resource Commission approved the nomination of the Sierra Railway Shops as the newest California State Landmark at their meeting on April 22nd. The next step is for the nomination to be signed by the Director of State Parks (really, just a formality now), order a brass plaque, and build a monument. We will also be working with Cal Trans to install signage on the highway. This is very long past due, and a positive step for Railtown!

### 150th Anniversary Web Site

This year as we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of California State Parks, there are a lot of extra activities state wide that you should know about. You can visit the official 150th Anniversary web site to find out more. Click on the Calendar tab to view special events happening state wide for any month during 2014. Just go to: [www.150.parks.ca.gov](http://www.150.parks.ca.gov)

### Red Flag Testing

Have you ever been riding the train on a Saturday or Sunday and suddenly, the train stops and the conductor bails out in a hurry, usually talking on the radio to the engineer? Have you ever wondered what is going on? If you've been around awhile you might shake your head knowingly and assume the train has stopped for a "red flag". When the train crew resolves the problem and comes back on board, and the train continues on its journey, they will usually tell you what happened - the engineer stopped for a red flag.

According to the General Code of Operating Rules (commonly referred to as GCOR) rule 5.4.7, a red flag is displayed where trains must stop. The train must not proceed until the flag has been removed by the employee or class of employee that placed it. But what does this really mean?

If you are a car host it means you have the rare and exciting opportunity to interpret one of the most common means of operations testing that we experience at Railtown. Our trains can be red flagged by one of three different entities: Railtown's DSLE (Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers), the Sierra Railroad, or the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The majority of our red flag testing is administered by the Sierra Railroad and our own DSLE.

Once a crew member (usually the engineer or fireman) spots a red flag, they communicate with each other and the conductor that there is a red flag ahead and will stop the train short of the red flag. The conductor will then initiate contact with the entity that placed the red flag to receive permission to proceed. Once permission is received and the crew has a short job briefing, the conductor boards the train again and signals the engineer he is clear to proceed.

Sometimes, the crew has a "heads-up" that red flag testing by the Sierra may occur on an operating day based on what is included in the track warrant issued that day. Testing performed by Railtown staff is usually a complete surprise, as it is not listed on the daily track warrant.

The engine and train crews are well trained in how to handle red flag testing and have continually passed each red flag operational test we've had, by both the Sierra Railroad and Railtown staffs. This is something that we can all be proud of and can easily interpret to the public when stopped for a red flag on one of our regular excursions during the operating season.

(submitted by Stephanie Tadlock)



**PO Box 1250**  
**Jamestown, CA 95327**  
**Return Service Requested**

**TO:**



**Depot Store-** (209) 984-3953  
**Volunteer Desk-** (209) 984-4408  
**Volunteer Website-** <http://railtown.team.parks.ca.gov/volunteers>  
**Railtown Blog-** [www.railtown1897.wordpress.com](http://www.railtown1897.wordpress.com)  
**Newsletter Editor—** [Dave.Rainwater@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Dave.Rainwater@parks.ca.gov)  
**Crew Caboose-** (209) 984-0352



### **Railtown Paid and Volunteer Staff Contact Information**

*(all area codes are 209)*

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<b>Lisa DeLacy</b> , State Park Curator I (DER)	984-3119	<a href="mailto:Lisa.DeLacy@parks.ca.gov">Lisa.DeLacy@parks.ca.gov</a>
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<b>Karen Ethier</b> , Ticket Agent Coordinator	471-7525	<a href="mailto:kmethier@gmail.com">kmethier@gmail.com</a>
<b>Ron White</b> , Stationmaster Coordinator	551-7087	<a href="mailto:rbarryw@att.net">rbarryw@att.net</a>

*Newsletter Available in Alternative Format on Request*